

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Middletown, DC which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

The majority of my customers are able to subscribe to their local broadcast channels via satellite, but those who live in smaller television markets cannot. Currently, EchoStar offers local broadcast service in only 36 television markets. If the merger is approved, DISH Network and DIRECTV can more efficiently use their limited channel capacity and offer local service via satellite in all 210 TV markets nationwide. The ability to offer local broadcast channels to all of my customers makes selling the product easier and gives customers more choices among satellite and cable providers in the near future.

If the merger is approved, the new EchoStar will provide consumers in my area an affordable high speed Internet access service via satellite. There are a small number of customers in my area who do enjoy access to high-speed Internet access service via cable and DSL service. For them, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, potentially driving down prices of DSL and cable providers. However, the majority of the homes, schools and businesses in my area are beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires. For these customers, the new EchoStar would be their only chance of getting an affordable high speed Internet service.

Whether or not my customers have access to cable, and most do not, all of them will benefit from the new company's ability to better compete with cable. EchoStar has pledged to offer nationwide prices and services -- bringing the benefits of vigorous competition with cable -- to customers everywhere.

EchoStar retailers like me will gain the ability to offer the popular sports packages that would otherwise only be available on DIRECTV, once the merger is completed. This additional programming will increase customer demand, and improve sales.

Please support the merger between EchoStar Communications Corporation and Hughes Electronics. There are many benefits of the merger, but I believe that most importantly, the new company will increase competition with cable and help hold down cable rate increases. These savings, in turn, will be passed along to customers, which will be good for my business.

Sincerely,

Richard Bye
5101 Summit Bridge Road
Middletown, DC 19709